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Counterfeit drugs making their way into Long Island pharmacies



(10/11/03) **DEER PARK** - Counterfeit drugs have found their way to the Island's local pharmacies. Now a local congressman is trying to find a remedy.

Deer Park resident and liver transplant patient Tim Fagan's prescription "Epigen" turned out to be counterfeit. The difference in the label was a missing degree mark you can hardly see and the difference in the medicine was life threatening. The medicine Tim injected was only a fraction of the strength he needed.

Officials say it is nearly perfect a crime because the person affected is already sick and may just think the drugs they're taking aren't working.

Now congressman Steve Israel (D-Huntington) is proposing legislation to try to plug loopholes in the system and give the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) new powers. Israel says the FDA relies on the pharmaceutical industry to police itself and to recall these counterfeit drugs themselves. He says that is a completely inadequate response and wants to make it possible for the FDA to crack down.

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